Utilities Helping Utilities

Joint Policy Statement on Mutual Aid & Assistance Networks

The water and wastewater sectors are committed to a “Utilities Helping Utilities” concept and are taking steps to encourage utilities and governments to establish mutual aid and assistance networks. The purpose of these networks is to provide a method whereby water or wastewater utilities that have sustained damages from natural or manmade events could obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services as necessary, from other water and wastewater utilities. The objective is to provide rapid, short-term deployment of emergency services to restore the critical operations of the affected water or wastewater utility.

A pre-established agreement among a network of utilities can complement and enhance local capabilities to prepare for and respond to a broad range of threats, both natural and manmade. The Province of Ontario Emergency Response Plan encourages the establishment of such mutual aid and assistance networks as a recommended practice for municipalities when developing their emergency response procedures.

Formalizing the existing capability to provide mutual aid and assistance provides the water and wastewater sectors with a degree of resiliency against natural or manmade disaster to ensure continuity of service to our sectors’ customers.

It is essential that all partners in the water and wastewater community work together to support this concept. We encourage our members to discuss this concept with peers and take the steps necessary to become part of the Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network in Ontario.